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Impair Healthy Healing In People Over The Age Of 30!

What Prevents Alzheimer's?

By Susan Dunn

What Prevents Alzheimer's? by Susan Dunn, MA, Personal & Professional Development

Coach

The answer is still "we don't know," but we're getting closer.

Alzheimer's is not normal in the course of aging, and it's more than "a decline in memory." People suffering from Alzheimer's, through progressive destruction of brain cells, lose the ability to think, reason, learn and communicate, and also undergo personality changes. For the ten warning signs of Alzheimer's go here: <http://www.alz.org/AboutAD/10Signs.htm> . Alzheimer's is eventually fatal because the person cannot move or swallow.

Although around 12 million people worldwide have Alzheimer's, and 4–4.5 million in the US, research in this field is still new and not enough is known about either prevention or cure. Much of the research "suggests" but is not conclusive.

RISK FACTORS

The biggest risk factor is aging, with about 50% of people over 85 years of age having Alzheimer's in the US. According to some sources, there's evidence it has the same risk factors as for heart disease: high blood pressure, high cholesterol and elevated homocysteine, a protein building block.

In an article called "Homocysteine is a Strong Risk factor for Alzheimer's Disease," (New England Journal of Medicine, 2002 Feb 14; 346:476–483), researchers concluded that "an increased homocysteine level is a strong, independent risk factor for the development of dementia and Alzheimer's disease."

VITAMIN E

According to research done by Martha Clare Morris, ScD, Associate Professor of Internal Medicine and the Rush Institute for Healthy Aging, Chicago, Illinois, lots of vitamin E through food intake, not

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supplements is helpful. (www.medscape.com) while another study (<http://www.docguide.com/news/content.nsf/news/8525697700573E1885256C00004A766D>) suggests that both food intake and supplements of vitamin E is helpful.

Foods high in vitamin E are wheat germ, almonds, vegetable oils, margarine, and seeds (especially sunflower seeds).

1 T. of wheat germ provides 34.6 mg. of vitamin E, ½ cup of chocolate covered almonds, 14.3 mg., 1 T. corn oil, 11–14 mg., 1 T. soybean oil, 8.8–14 mg.

According to the Almond Board of California, just one ounce of almonds provides more than 35% of the daily value of vitamin E.

FAT

According to studies reported in www.medscape.com, high intake of saturated fat doubles the risk of Alzheimer's disease, and moderate intake of trans fat increases the risk by 2–3 times. Lower risk is associated with high intake of both polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fats. However there have been inconsistent findings, with another study finding no influence from high ingestion of polyunsaturated fats.

FISH AND n–3 FATTY ACIDS

There is some evidence that dietary intake of fish and n–3 fatty acids can protect against Alzheimer's but again, no causal association has been established.

Assuming that vitamin E and n–3 fatty acids and unhydrogenated, unsaturated fats help, your best bet would be to eat plenty of oil–based salad dressings, nuts, seeds, fish, mayonnaise, and eggs.

CURRY

If you love curry like I do, this information will be welcome. One of the lowest rates of Alzheimer's appears in Indian villages, with only 1% of people 65 and older having the condition.

A recent study suggests that the reason might be a diet high in curcumin, a compound found in turmeric which is used in curry, which has long been used as an herbal treatment in that country. Researchers investigating this link will also be looking at rosemary and ginger, also high in the Indian diet, because their structure is similar to curcumin. [Source: "The Curry Spice Curcumin Reduces Oxidative Damage and Amyloid Pathology in an Alzheimer Transgenic Mouse," Lim, Chuet al.]

TESTOSTERONE

Another link in the chain may be testosterone levels. Dr. Sozos Ch. Papasozomenos and Dr. Alikunju Shanavas, from the University of Texas–Houston Medical School conclude from their studies that "testosterone given alone to aging men and given combined with 17–beta–estradiol to postmenopausal women would probably prove beneficial in preventing and/or treating Alzheimer's disease." [Reported

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in the proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.] However, the case for hormones for postmenopausal women is far from settled and not at all clear.

LITHIUM

Another possibility is lithium. This long-standing treatment for bipolar disorder has worked as a preventative with mice, and may be useful for humans, though the side-effects are high, and it doesn't help people who already have Alzheimer's. [Source: Nature, 2003]

WEIGHT, WOMEN & ALZHEIMER'S

Researchers have also found a strong relationship in women between being overweight at age 70 and developing Alzheimer's 10–18 years later, although being overweight doesn't appear to effect men and Alzheimer's. (http://www.stopgettingsick.com/Conditions/condition_template.cfm/6880/24/1)

USE IT OR LOSE IT

Studies also suggest that keeping mentally active can ward off Alzheimer's [New England Journal of

Medicine]. Oddly physical activity had no positive preventive effect except in the case of dancing. Researchers speculated that could be because music engages the mind. (http://www.stopgettingsick.com/Conditions/condition_template.cfm/6817/24/1)

These are just a few of the latest "suggestions." So little is known for sure, and we hope research continues. In the meantime, we do hear the same things over and over - good diet, exercise, and staying mentally active.

Resource: The Alzheimer's Association, <http://www.alz.org>

For medical advice, consult your personal healthcare professional.

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Prevention Of Alzheimer's Disease

By I Henman

Since the causes and mode of progress of Alzheimer's disease is still a riddle to experts in this field, some preventive measures at least may put a check on this distressing disorder. In course of random search, it was observed that people with a family history of Alzheimer's are prone to become victims while studies have shown that the disease may set in as a person begins to age. So, if your family tree

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has several black spots indicating Alzheimer's, you better be careful. Even without any family history, an aging individual should also take the following measures for prevention of Alzheimer's disease.

Lifestyle changes for the prevention of Alzheimer's disease

Though difficult at the outset, lifestyle changes, change of outlook and active mental and physical routine are supposed to render help in prevention of Alzheimer's disease. To begin with, let us see how mental stimulation may assist in the prevention of Alzheimer's disease.

Health studies conducted on nuns revealed that those who participated regularly in intellectual pursuits were less likely to contract Alzheimer's. Further studies also proved that a mere brainwave might not put a stringent check on Alzheimer's altogether, but it certainly delayed the onset and the progression of the symptoms that are no less distressing. So, for prevention of Alzheimer's disease one could just about read adventure stories, travel literature, sci-fi stories or do Crossword puzzles, play chess or scrabble.

Physical activity

Recent studies have shown that apart from mental stimulation, certain forms of physical activity may come of assistance for the prevention of Alzheimer's disease. Since the actual causes are unknown, it is believed that physical activity promotes increased blood flow, heart and lung capacity, etc and the combined effect should prevent Alzheimer's disease. However, physical activity need not necessarily be rigorous. Regular daily walk or swim, if possible or a game of golf or better still, any outdoor activity with small children may delay the onset of the disease.

Social Interaction

As people age, they tend to avoid social activity, preferring a solitary existence. However, studies have shown that aversion to social interaction prevents release of certain hormones necessary to build up immunity in human being. So, maintaining a social network, visiting friends and relations, attending parties, etc may help in the prevention of Alzheimer's disease.

Diet

Though no definite diet plan has yet been introduced for patients suffering from Alzheimer's, it is generally believed that diet recommended for cardiovascular diseases is also good for Alzheimer's. Besides, experts studying in preventive medicine have indicated that antioxidants like vitamin C and E and fish oil play a fairly important role in the prevention of Alzheimer's disease. In any event, such diet will do more good than harm to any individual, especially when he or she is aging.

Please note that this article is for educational purposes only, consult your family doctor or a medical expert before ever trying any remedy or treatment for a disease such as alzheimers.

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and

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